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Abstract

Hazing has always been an issue in fraternities and sororities. Even though there has been a push to reduce the amount of hazing through research and trainings, it continues to cause harm to the community. The purpose of this study is to gain incite from fraternity alums toward understanding the use of hazing activities while orienting fraternity men to the organization. This study examined the issue from the individuals experience, to their role in inducting new members, and now as alums to gain insight in to why chapters continue to that cycle. Results showed that individuals in groups social construct their definition of hazing and these new member processes need to continue to evolve to better shift the culture of the chapters.

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Fraternal New Member Processes: An Alumni Perspective

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showed that individuals in groups social construct their definition of hazing and these new

member processes need to continue to evolve to better shift the culture of the chapters.

Key Words: Fraternity, hazing, Greek Life

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to fraternity men. Our choices have consequences.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As I was reminded along my journey, I am a man of brevity. However, I hope this is the one time that I am able to be more than brief as I would not have been able to accomplish this without the help of the following individuals or groups.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) community has been around since 1825 and the benefits of joining have stood firm since that time as well (Syrett, 2009). Today nearly 800,000 undergraduates of college students are members of social fraternity and sorority organizations (CNN.com). These include helping with members intellectual development, cultivation of leadership skills, and citizenship through community and philanthropic efforts, just to name a few (DeBard & Sacks, 2010; Pike, 2003; Thompson, Jr., Oberle,and Lilley, 2011). As members of the community graduate and earn jobs, they are more likely to donate back to their undergraduate institution due to being involved in a community that "promotes friendship and networks" (Wang & Ashcraft, 2014). Each year the fraternity community adds approximately 99,800 new members (CNN.com).

After a potential new member accepts their invitation for membership, they go through what is called a new member process where they become versed in all things about their new organization (Cokley & Wright, 1995). Formerly known as pledging, the process "can be viewed as a rite of passage" into fraternity membership (Cokley & Wright, 1995, p. 3). The intent of this time is to help the new members bond with the current members in an effort develop stronger fraternal bonds. They use language like "brother" and "family" to describe the relationships they are developing. Thus, they engage in activities to develop trust, build community, and develop a foundation for which to build lifelong friendships.

As the new members begin developing these fraternal bonds they may engage in activities that are riskier and can lead to individuals making decisions to participate in an effort to be accepted; this is typically where hazing has entered in to the process. For the purpose of

this study, hazing will be defined as any action that must be undertaken in order to gain admittance into a fraternity; this may include those actions that they willingly or unwillingly partake in. Today hazing is seen often in the media in the form of hazing gone wrong. With instances of new members drinking alcohol to the point of death or engaging in inappropriate or even illegal behaviors (such as stealing things) in the attempt of being accepted by the older members. Nationally there have been instances like the Piazza incident at Pennsylvania State University in 2017 or the Foltz incident at Bowling Green State University in 2021 where individuals have lost their lives to their participation (Deak, 2018). This concept of hazing in the community is not a new one; rather hazing has been prevalent in fraternities since they were founded.

Personal Statement

To help the reader better understand why I care about the topic I want to share my personal background. I was a member of a fraternity at my undergraduate institution, but I did not plan to be. Growing up I had heard about what fraternities do and I was determined that it was not for me. My older brother and father both were in the same fraternity and challenged me to go through the recruitment process, at the bare minimum, due to the connections and opportunities that it opened for them. After arriving on my undergraduate campus I set out to blaze my own trail, which didn't quite turn out the way I thought it would.

At my campus' student activities fair I was drawn into a conversation with a fraternity member due to an interest expressed on my shirt. As I was talking to this individual, I had the realization that my thoughts were preconceived, and I did not know what the community was like. Due to my family's fraternity being on campus I decided to check them out as a favor to my

dad and brother. It was their values that they lived and preached that ended up sealing the deal: non-secret and non-hazing.

The non-hazing value struck home with me; all the negative things I had heard or seen about fraternities stemmed from this idea of harming others, which appeared to be the opposite of what the organizations were intended to do. Since I knew that I was not going to be hazed, I joined my family's fraternity. As I joined the fraternity and began the process of becoming a member I was subjected to hazing, by the definitions I have researched. At the time though, it did not seem as if I was participating in hazing activities because the activities that were being asked of me were personally deemed harmless and fun; so I willingly participated.

One thing, however, that I questioned then, and I continue to question today, is why people decide to put themselves in harm's way to join any organization? Is it to prove themselves physically or mentally? Do they do it so that they can have power and do unto others that was done unto them? Now, as a graduate student with an assistantship position working in fraternity and sorority life, the question still bothers me. This is where this researcher's inquiry comes from and why this research is important to me.

Purpose of the Study

The benefits associated with joining Fraternity and Sorority Life are numerous (Walker et. al, 2014); yet the community has been overshadowed by the negative consequences that come with joining, mainly in the form of hazing. The purpose of this study is to understand why hazing continues to be used as a form of orienting fraternity men to the organization. It is important to note that groupthink theory is not inherently negative, and as a result there might not be a direct correlation between groupthink theory and hazing.

Research Questions

The questions that are used to help gain insight into the new member processes and individual perceptions of hazing are as follows:

1. How do fraternity members describe the new member process?

2. How do fraternity members define and describe hazing?

3. Why do they participate in these activities that would otherwise be considered questionable?

Significance of the Study

As more hazing incidents are being reported, it is important to understand the rationale behind those incidents. This study will help to fill in the gaps in the literature surrounding the rationale that individuals within chapters have, not only behind hazing, but also the way the groupthink can be used to help create programming to stop hazing. Understanding why fraternity members act the way they do as a group, can help to provide professionals in the field information to better construct programs to influence the groupthink mentality that chapters have. However, the overarching purpose of this study is to help professionals in the field develop programming to limit the negative effect that groupthink theory plays in chapters.

Limitations

The biggest limitation of the study is that of transparency from the participants. Due to the secret nature of fraternities, participants may have been hesitant and exact in their responses, even though the researcher is a member of the community as well. The interview was designed to build a connection with the participant that leads to trust and creates a space where they can share their experiences without harm or consequence. The researcher's past experience in the Fraternity and Sorority Life community is another limitation of the study. As participants share their stories, I may find connections or share similar feelings that divert my thinking from the

participant. During this research I will journal, and speak with my thesis advisor and members

of my committee to process feelings I have and reactions to what I am learning through my

research. Another limitation is that this is qualitative research, which means it will not be

generalizable. However, that is not the purpose of this research. The research is to provide

insight into the new member process for fraternities and the role hazing plays from their unique

perspectives. The intent is not to then apply that to all members of the fraternity community. As

the research was conducted another limitation that arose was the lack of participants. This was

primarily due to the snowball method of recruitment for the study. While it would have been

nice to have a larger pool of participants those that did agree provided insightful information and

a decision was made that this would be enough.

Definition of Terms

There are several important definitions that need to be clarified before moving forward.

These terms are widely accepted and described through the fraternal organizations with

definitions provided on various organizations and university websites. For clarity, the definitions

provided below are those that are being utilized for this study.

active member/active/actives*:* A college undergraduate who has been initiated into

fraternity or sorority membership and is active at the collegiate level. In this paper they will

simply be addressed as active or actives.

bid: A formal invitation to join a fraternity or sorority, which is typically offered after a

period of organized recruitment to the whole fraternity and/or sorority community.

brother: Within the fraternal community many familial words are used to describe the

process of becoming a part of the organization as a family. Thus, members of the same fraternity

refer to each other as *brothers*. They may also use terms like big and little to describe lineage as

they join the organization, however for the purpose of this paper, *brother* will come to mean any active member of the organization.

chapter: A campus affiliate of a fraternity. This can be a *chapter* of a national organization. But refers to the specific fraternity that the individual holds membership in.

groupthink: The theory developed by Janis (1972) that identified how individuals who are members of a group will think as one unit, overriding individuals' thoughts.

hazing: Any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a fraternity regardless of a person's willingness to participate. The intent is often to humiliate, degrade, abuse, or endanger.

initiation: The ritual within a fraternal organization that marks the end of their new member education and their transition into full membership within the organization.

new member: After receiving a bid to join a fraternity/sorority the individual is then identified as a *new member* where they then begin the process of education, learning all there is to know about the organization they are joining. At this point they have not become an active member of the fraternal organization. Upon completion of their new member orientation they complete the ritual of becoming an active member.

rituals: Rituals are traditions within fraternal organizations that mark significant moments or transitions within that group. There are rituals for new members, activation of members, preparing for graduation and so on. Each of these has historic roots within the organization.

Summary

Fraternal organizations have a long history within higher education, providing a place for many students to connect and develop strong bonds with one another (Cokley & Wright, 1995).

These connections also affirm their position at the institution and provide a deep and lasting bond to both. Hazing has been, and continues to be, a prevalent issue concerning the new member process of fraternities and sororities, with fraternities seeing most of the cases (Deak, 2018). The majority of hazing occurs during the new member process, with active members believing that they have a right and duty to do unto others what has been done onto them. By learning about the processes and mindsets of students joining these groups will aid in further identifying ways to eliminate this from the process. The next chapter will focus more on the research surrounding this topic.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

This chapter focuses on previous research dedicated to providing information and clarification on fraternities, hazing, and the new member process. It uses a historical tone to highlight both fraternities and hazing and provides clarity on what the new member process looks like. Also located in this chapter, is a look at *groupthink theory* which will be used in the larger study to examine hazing in fraternities.

History of Fraternities

On November 25, 1825, five men at Union College came together and began the fraternal system that is still in place today (Syrett, 2009). It is important to note that the system they originally created was for White men, because that is the population that primarily had access to higher education. After their organized military unit had been disbanded, these men felt a gap and wanted to fill that gap by starting a secret society, dedicated "for literary and social purposes," calling the organization Kappa Alpha Society (Syrett, 2009). This group began to expand quickly and added eight new members in the span of a month (Syrett, 2009). This idea of a Greek lettered secret society began to catch on at Union, with two new societies popping up within the first two years of the Kappa Alpha Society, those being Sigma Phi and Delta Phi (Syrett, 2009). What distinguished these secret societies from other secret societies that were present during this time, was the use of Greek letters, as well as the "reliance of initiation rituals from the Masonic Order" (Torbenson & Parks, 2009). Three other secret societies began at Union, Psi Upsilon in 1833, Chi Psi in 1841, and Theta Delta Chi in 1847, causing Union to be considered the Mother of Fraternities (Torbenson & Parks, 2009).

This idea of secret societies began to spread even more as institutions began to develop around the United States, but this time the three original societies at Union began to identify ways to start their organizations at different universities. By the mid-1850s, Greek lettered secret organizations could be found on most colleges and universities in the Northeastern United States, as well as some even in the South and Midwest (Syrett, 2009). The geographic range of Union, Williams College, and Hamilton College formed the northern end of the Cradle of Social Fraternities, while Yale, Wesleyan, New York University, and Columbia formed the southern end (Torbenson & Parks, 2009). This cradle is designated as the origin of the earliest fraternities, with other regions following suit as colleges began to form in other parts of the country.

It was around this time that students began to insist on education that would prepare themselves for a multitude of careers, rather than just that of a religious figure, which can be seen in the shift of fraternities at this time (Syrett, 2009). During this period in history, colleges were still designated primarily as institutions for White men and these individuals were looking for opportunities to read texts beyond those required in the classroom (Thelin, 2019). At this point in history, men who went to college were not seen as men, but rather as boys, and as a result were treated as such from their faculty (Syrett, 2009). By joining a secret society, or fraternity, they were able to exercise a sort of independence against the very people who refused to give them that very thing (Syrett, 2009). During this period of higher education, there were few activities planned outside of the classroom learning environment; thus, students created their own activities (Thelin, 2019). Fraternities were also an escape from the monotony of college life which consisted of "prayer, recitation, and study" (Syrett, 2009).

This increase of the fraternal system continued up until the Civil War. As college enrollment dropped due to the war, so did the fraternity numbers (Torbenson & Parks, 2009).

Some fraternities became inactive during the conflict. When the war was over, colleges and fraternal organizations alike started to rebuild what they had lost, although national organizations became hesitant to reestablish their chapters in the South (Torbenson & Parks, 2009). This hesitation, and even at the onset of the war, ended up becoming another creation point, as fraternal organizations began to be emerge in the South. Of the total 53 chapters that were founded in the 1860s, over half of them were founded in the South (Torbenson & Parks, 2009). These still somewhat secret societies that were gaining attention also faced challenges. In 1874 a publication that "attacked fraternities for their immoralities and selectivity in membership" (Torbenson & Parks, 2009), caused many chapters to become inactive.

As historically White fraternal organizations were developing, the creation of African American fraternities also began with Alpha Phi Alpha beginning 1906 as they were founded at Cornell University (Ross, p. 8). This opened the door for Black men to experience what a fraternity was about, as they were rejected from established fraternities based on their skin color (Ross, p.9). In fact, from 1900 to 1930, African American fraternities expanded so quickly at universities that did not have any established fraternities, that Phi Beta Sigma, an African American fraternity founded in 1914, was the leader of all expansion to such campuses, regardless of the race (Torbenson & Parks, 2009).

With the advent of these fraternities, also came the creation of national umbrella organizations to watch over the different communities: the National Interfraternity Council (NIC) for traditional white fraternities in 1909, the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) for traditional white sororities in 1902, and the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) for African American fraternities, and later sororities as well, 1930 (Torbenson & Parks, 2009). Initially, these organizations were created in response to collaboration and sharing of assets. (Johansen &

Slantcheva- Durst, 2018). Since the beginning of these organizations, campuses have resolved to make campus councils act in place of the umbrella organizations. The NIC was one such way to help manage all of the fraternities on a campus and help provide a space for them to have a collective voice as well as discuss issues facing the community. (Smithhisler, 2003). Today NIC, as well as other similar structures, continue to play the same role that they always have; however, NIC has seen groups move away and work independently.

Hazing

The word hazing has come to mean different things to different people. Edelman (2005) defined hazing as "any activity expected of someone that joins a group, which humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers its victims''(p. 310). However, hazing has also been defined more broadly as "any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group (such as a student club, organization, or team) that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers regardless of a person's willingness to participate" (Hoover & Pollard, 1999, p. 8). It has also been defined more generally as "a broad term encompassing any action or activity which does not contribute to the positive development of a person" by Mothers Against School Hazing, otherwise known as MASH (Lipkins, 2006, p. 13). In the state of Illinois, the definition of hazing talks about the hazer and how they knowingly engage in an activity where they require another individual to perform in a certain way. They identify that this can happen in any school setting and that it is typically required for membership in a group associated with the institution (Illinois General Assembly). Along with this, Illinois has published an anti-hazing law, with a person receiving a misdemeanor for hazing another, unless there is bodily harm.

While these definitions are similar, the difference of "endangers regardless of a person's willingness to participate" in Hoover & Pollard's (1999, p. 8) definition and "does not contribute

to the positive development of a person" in MASH's definition changes the way that hazing is presented. Rather than hazing being viewed as an activity that people can choose to participate in or that hazing might present some benefits, it allows the conversation to be driven in a way that would help to narrow down the definition. However, no matter the exact definition of hazing, one thing that is true is that hazing is not a new phenomenon.

History of Hazing

Hazing has existed since Ancient Greece and continued up into the Medieval Ages (Ball, 2004; Lewis, 1991). At one point, hazing was even legalized in England as it was thought that it "taught obedience" (Torbenson & Parks, 2009). Hazing was then brought to the United States as early as the 1600s, although no case was brought to court until 1873, when student Mortimer Leggett passed away due to hazing at Cornell University (Acquaviva, 2008). It is important to note that although hazing can often times be attributed mainly to fraternities and sororities, hazing can be seen elsewhere on college campuses. According to Hoover and Pollard (1999), 35% of new members of sports teams undergo hazing, as well as 22% of those joining a music, art, or theatre club. This supports what Nuwer (1999) found with hazing being "a social problem in the United States" (p. 21).

Hazing was even prevalent in the way the colleges operated early on and throughout the nineteenth century. Underclassmen learned early on that there was a hierarchy to the collegiate system and that they were at the bottom. If they were approached by a senior they were to look away and even move out of the way (Syrett, 2009). This ties in with Cimino's (2011) macro theory on social dominance, which will be explained later on in this section. Often times, hazing was imposed on the freshmen by the sophomore class, as they had just gone through that process themselves and wanted to make sure that what was done to them was done to the next. To do so,

they exploited the Freshman Laws, whereby a sophomore student was to help freshmen students understand what life was like at university (Syrett, 2009). This hazing was seen through moving furniture to the middle of campus, "smoking out" or blowing smoke into a freshman's room by use of the keyhole. This would force the freshman out of their room where they could be hazed more (Syrett, 2009, p. 19).

These examples align with Lipkins' own definition of hazing which is "a process based on tradition that is used by groups to maintain a hierarchy" (2009, p. 13). The increase of hazing in fraternal groups can be seen through the "nineteenth-century fraternities' use of pledging as a way to recruit prep school students" (Nuwer, 1999, p. 122). The idea was that fraternities would try to recruit members before they were on college campuses so that the recruitment process was longer. In doing so, new members were truly earning their membership by having to endure that period. These horseplay acts eventually ended up with a death as result, which has been repeated throughout the history of fraternities. In 1873, Mortimer Leggett, a pledge to the Kappa Alpha Society at Cornell, passed away after being blindfolded and led through a forest by two active members before all three fell into a gorge (Nuwer, 1999, p. 123).

Today hazing is still a problem that the fraternity and sorority world is facing, along with other groups on the college campus (Allan, Kerschner, & Payne, 2018). In Allan, Kerschner, and Payne's study, seven institutions' fraternal organizations were examined. Their results indicated that 26% of the respondents participated in an activity defined as hazing. The predominant activity required of students to join organizations are drinking games, although enduring yelling and screaming were also higher up on the list as well. However, the researchers found a disconnect between hazing experiences and the labeling as such (Allan, Kerschner, & Payne, 2018). This disconnect is something that students have struggled with for decades (Allan &

Madden, 2008; Campo et al., 2005; Hamilton et al., 2013). This disconnect needs to be further

explored.

The organization StopHazing.org has provided a great deal of information, research, and

tools for working toward education and prevention of hazing activities. Through their research

they have identified a variety of hazing activities including those that are low to high risk. One

of their graphics is provided in Appendix A. It talks about low risk as including such things as

intimidation, demeaning names, and deception.

Rationale to Hazing

The rationale behind hazing is one that has been studied for decades and to which there

still is no definitive answer. However, Cimino (2011) and Keating et al. (2005) have come the

closest to answering this question. Cimino (2011) developed three macro theories from an

anthropological study, conducted by observing all weekly meetings and hazing processes of a

fraternity for a semester, in which to help explain the motivations for hazing which were

determined to include solidarity, social dominance, and loyalty. Rooted in Aronson and Mills

(1959), the solidarity theory is all about those being hazed rationalizing any hazing done to them

by increasing their liking for the organization. Aronson and Mills conducted a study where they

split participants into three separate groups to talk about the psychology of sex. They identified

that hazing creates a cognitive dissonance that can be resolved in two different ways. The first is

that the individual being hazed can convince themselves that what was happening was not so

bad, and the second is that they focus on the positives, while minimizing the negatives (1959).

Keating et al. have added on to this notion by arguing that hazing develops a dependency

between the hazers and the hazees, which causes the hazees to increase their liking for the hazers

(2005).

The loyalty theory that Cimino presented is one that has been well established in literature. The seminal work of Smith (1964) suggested that difficult and lengthy initiation processes among fraternities are designed to allow new members to prove their commitment to the organization. In comparison, Jones' (2004) research found that new members in fraternities allow themselves to be hazed to prove their worth to the fraternity. This correlates with some research done outside the Greek life realm. Johnson (2000) conducted in-depth interviews with twelve student athletes and argued that hazing rookies in sports is designed to prove their commitment to the team. Vigil (1996), on the other hand, found that gang initiations are designed to weed out the weak, when he observed and read literature regarding gang initiations.

The social dominance theory that Cimino (2011) presented is another well researched theory. This theory centers around the idea that hazers establish a dominance over the hazees (Cimino, 2011). This can be traced back to Durkheim (1912) when it was said that new members are hazed to "make them understand how superior" the active members are in relation to them (p. 318). Social dominance is especially prevalent in athletics. Rookies are expected to complete manual labor chores such as cleaning the locker room or carrying equipment, in order to better convey the dominance that older members on the team carry (Bryshun, 1997; Nuwer, 1999). Keating et al. added on to this insinuating that hazing associated with social dominance is there to keep the hierarchical order (2005).

New Member Process

The new member process is similar between fraternities and focuses on the history of the organization, the values, policies in place, how to act as a member, etc. (Pi Kappa Phi, Phi Delta Theta, Delta Upsilon, *Chapter Resources*). The intention in this process is for the new members to form relationships with their brothers as they learn about the legacy they are becoming a part

of and what this new membership means. These programs help to provide new members with a framework to build upon as they go through their Greek Life experience. These processes can last between four and eight weeks are designed to "provide them [new members] with the proper tools to become acclimated with the chapter (Phi Delta Theta, *Phikeia Education Program*). Although there may be different methods and means for how each fraternity does this process, there are more similarities than differences.

The use of popular culture, primarily depictions in films such as *Animal House* (1978), has led to the continuation and escalation of how the new member process in Greek Life is viewed today (Tingley et al., 2018). This has led to an even greater concern with the recruitment, intake, and initiation processes as it relates to students' health and well-being. One example of how this has become heightened is seen in the excessive alcohol consumption case, at Pennsylvania State University where a new member died during their new member process (Bittner, 2016; Deak 2017). This is in agreement with Filip (2012) and Nuwer's (1999) statistic that one fraternity new member dies each year due to hazing related activities.

As a result of these hazing deaths, some inter/national organizations have shortened, or in some cases removed, the new member process entirely. These new member processes in which hazing occur, are the largest detractor in Greek Life (Biddix et al., 2014; Kase, Rivera, & Hunt, 2016; Simmons, Bauman, & Ives, 2015). Hazing has escalated to the point that 44 out of the 50 states in the U.S. have declared it as illegal, going so far as to charging assault, battery, or any other criminal statuses as applicable (Alvarez, 2015; Parks, Jones, & Hughey, 2015). Tingley et al. (2018) found that there was a gender discrepancy in hazing and pledging rules. Men are more likely to accept and participate in mild forms of hazing, as well as promoting the use of more severe hazing. Ironically, men are also most likely to speak out against the hazing, both from the

new members being hazing, as well as the dissenting active members in the organization. Women, on the other hand, tend to find more positives in the new member and initiation processes (Tingley et al, 2018, p. 54).

For new members who decide to stay in their respective organizations, there are positives to the Greek experience: higher graduation rates, alumni support, and campus leadership positions, to name a few (Ahren et al., 2014; DeSantis, 2007; Gumprecht, 2006; Hevel, Martin & Pascarella, 2014). The alumni support can help not only the organization itself, but also helps to bridge the gap between the university and Greek Life as well (Tingley et al, 2018, p. 47).

Conceptual Framework

It is important to go beyond the literature and look at the theories that will help shape the outline of this research. The purpose of this study is to examine the role that groupthink plays into the new member process of fraternities and sororities with an underlying examination of the hazing that occurs in these processes, so looking at the role that these factors play into the study is important. In order to look at hazing through these lenses, it is important to look at the theories of *stages of moral development, groupthink,* and, *perfect storm.*

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

As college students start to progress in their time in higher education, they experience many opportunities to grow morally. Students can come in with some moral development, but while they are at their institution they will continue to develop. Kohlberg (1958) began his research by looking at young men who were in high school and college and then developed his theory which includes three stages of morality that individuals progress through: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. Each stage is broken into two sub-stages.

In the preconventional phase, individuals start at obedience and whether or not they are 'good' or not, and work to be good to avoid punishment (Kohlberg, 1958). In this phase there is a strong view of the authority figures holding all power and being good and wanting good for them. In fraternities this can be seen during the new member process, as they see current members as the authority figures they need to please and believing they will not harm them. New members work their hardest to prove that they are good and should be a part of the group. Part of this is due to the fact that they may be implicitly or explicitly told that if they do not do what is asked of them then they will be punished. This can come in the form of something mild like reciting a reading or quote, or harsher like paddling or forced to consume something such as alcohol.

The second stage of preconventional is the idea of individualism and exchange (Kohlberg, 1958). At this stage, individuals will realize that there is not just one correct view that is shown to them; rather different individuals have different viewpoints or one way of thinking is not bad, it's different. In fraternities, this can be seen when new members question or refuse to do something during their orientation process that goes against what they are being asked or told to do. This likely comes closer to the end of the process. It could also occur among current members who are coordinating this process who challenge each other on what should or should not be done.

In the conventional phase, individuals work to be 'good' in order to receive the approval of others (Kohlberg, 1958). Kohlberg (1958) identified that the individual is beginning to learn and understand the rules, whatever those might be, and they come to understand them as necessary to society and then motivated to follow them for the good of all. There is still an orientation to being seen as a good person by authority figures. This can be seen through new

members allowing themselves to participate in hazing practices that they might not agree with, allowing themselves to be put through questionable activities because it is part of the process of becoming a brother. Active members can also be at this stage of the conventional phase as either a new member helping plan the new member process or in transitioning to being seen as a full brother. In this they are learning to go with the status quo so that others in the chapter will like them, or making decisions that may challenge those in perceived authority positions.

The next stage is maintaining the social order. According to Kohlberg (1958), this is where really following the rules for the greater good comes in to play. Members may look to national offices or a fraternity advisor to work to understand what the policies are and what they activities they should not be engaging in. This works closely with the previous stage as the status quo is trying to be maintained. This is where those who are now members may engage in activities that were done to them, appropriate or inappropriate for the sake of not upsetting the membership or alumni. New members may engage in the activity if they are told things like, "we have all done this," or "this is what we all went through." They are coming to understand that this is required for membership.

In the postconventional phase, the individual begins to understand the universal ethical principles. In stage five they become focused on individual rights and justice as their thinking becomes more abstract. Finding fraternity members at this stage would likely be rare. However, for those few that may get here they would likely be upperclassman who have been members for a couple of years and they may begin to question some of their activities and whether they are harmful or beneficial to the individuals or not. They work to change what is happening, changing the status quo and challenging those leaders who were pushing it. For the even rarer new

member who might be at this stage they would likely choose to not participate and leave the group rather than participate in these activities.

Kohlberg (1958) identified that very few make it to the final stage, universal principles, because it is about the individual developing their own set of moral guidelines. It is rare that a chapter, of their own will and accord, will challenge the status quo that is before them, which would include creating new sets of rules and practices. This has been seen at the national level as those who are alums of the groups have continued to work with the organization and are developmentally in a place where they can see things from these various perspectives and work to develop better structures to put in place with their fraternity. However, that usually comes down the road, not during undergraduate studies.

Understanding that different individuals within a fraternity may be at different places in their moral development is important because it impacts the actions of the group as a whole. Those in similar places in their moral development are less likely to challenge the views of the authority figures than those who may be at different levels. Those less developed are likely to challenge those who are more advanced because they do not yet understand that their actions may be perceived as in appropriate or wrong. Challenging one another is an important part of the developmental process, but having a group that is fairly homogenous is not as productive for growth and where some groups may get in to trouble.

Groupthink

Janis' (1972) theory of *groupthink* centers around the idea that groups rely on what they have been taught, even if what they have been taught is not working for them. Janis looked at leaders during the Bay of Pigs Invasion, specifically how they chose to confirm to the social dynamics of those in the room to reach the decision that they did. Prior research conducted by

Janis found that normal people (those without high-pressure leadership roles) aligned themselves with the majority's decision, even if that is not the case with all members of the group. Groupthink festers into the group so that there is no rudeness or other forms of major disagreement with the majority's thinking, going so far as to change the stance of the dissent into thinking that the majority's thinking is not all that bad (Janis, 1972).

Groupthink also causes a lack of impartial leadership among the group that it is forming which then leads to several negative impacts. Schaedig, (n.d.,) examined groupthink and determined that poor decisions, self-censorship, and blindness to negative outcomes were three of the most common negative impacts. Poor decisions means that ideas are not fully thought through nor are the consequences of their actions (Schaedig, 2022). If we examine this in fraternities, this is when the hazing first occurs. Consider the group of members who talk about having their new members consume food that they deem as disgusting. Their intent may be to have the new members be disgusted by the food, to get them to gag or even throw-up, but they haven't fully thought about the mental, psychological, or physical harm this may create. This leads into the second negative impact of self-censorship, where individual members of the group decide to hold back their ideas because it is not what the group is seeming to want. This is where poor decisions go unchecked and are left undiscussed which would help them develop a process for considering consequences. Unchecked the group that decides to give new members gross food, then decides to add alcohol to the concoction, another poor decision missed because of a lack of self-censorship. Blindness to negative outcomes is also a negative impact which can be seen when members of a fraternity decide not to think about what the consequences of their hazing might be.

Applying this theory to hazing in fraternities, one can look at the rationalization that active members have when agreeing to haze the new members, even if they do not actually agree with the hazing themselves. This is the main lens that will be driving the research of this study.

Perfect Storm

Hazing is often seen as a given, and needed, tradition of fraternities; as it creates a bond or unification of those who go through the hazing event, making them believe that they are better off for it (Lipkins, n.d.). Lipkins (n.d.) conducted research and has developed a series of web resources around hazing, especially looking at this experience through perfect storm lens. In her research, Lipkins *perfect storm theory* is utilized to examine what makes up the conditions for hazing, or hazardous hazing, otherwise known as the titular perfect storm. This theory will be used to support groupthink in examining why students in fraternities rationalize the hazing they conduct, throughout this study.

The first factor in the theory is the environment designated for the hazing activity. Looking at the time of day, the location, off campus or on campus helps to give an idea of the setting, which in turn leads to how dangerous the hazing may be. If a fraternity is able to secure a location where they can all gather and there will be no supervision, the more likely the hazardous the hazing will be (Lipkins, n.d.). Often times, once a location is found that meets the group's needs and requirements, that location is going to be used in future years.

The characteristic factor examines the leaders of the hazing activity. These leaders could be the elected leaders of the fraternity, or they could be upperclassmen who are acting with authority in carrying on the tradition of what was done to them. Regardless of whether an elected official or not, those who conduct the hazing believe that any inadequacies that they felt during their hazing process must be felt by those who follow them (Lipkins, n.d.). These members play

the role of perpetrators and can feel the same inadequacies that they felt as they were hazes and want to cover those up. The bystanders, or the active members who may not agree with the hazing but do not feel comfortable speaking up, have the most power in situations of hazing (Lipkins, n.d.). Depending on their actions, hazing will or will not occur because they have the power to intervene and stop the behavior or encourage it to continue. However, one individual alone cannot stop the hazing activity, but a group of bystanders can (Lipkins, n.d.). Since bystanders typically have the numbers over both the perpetrators and victims combined, if they step in the hazing can and will be shut down. However, according to the research conducted by Lipkins (n.d.) 36% of students say they do not report hazing primarily because "there's no one to tell" and 27% feel that "adults won't handle it right" (https://www.insidehazing.com/definitions-why-perfect-storm).

Internal processes also influence hazing activities (Lipkins, n.d.). Students, regardless of class, look to join fraternities to look for a place that becomes a home for them, or where they will develop a strong sense of belonging. They have left their family behind when choosing to come to college and are looking for a group to accept them and be that new family for them. However, just because they are looking for a new group does not mean that they are the same person that left their family, as college is the time that most students seek to explore themselves and their identities. These identities may be ones that they have held onto all their lives, or maybe they are finding new identities. By agreeing to join a fraternity, students are undertaking opportunities that they did not have before to develop those identities (Lipkins, n.d.).

 Summary

This chapter has laid out the literature that is guiding this study. Hazing is something that has been around for a while with no sign of going away not only in fraternity and sorority life,

but also in other student organizations on college campuses. The aim of this study is to continue

the conversation that this literature has started, toward better understanding of what leads one in

to engaging in these activities toward developing means of moving to a hazing free college

environment.

CHAPTER III

Methods

This qualitative study was conducted to examine the orientation of new members to fraternities, and how groupthink influences this experience specifically in situations that involve hazing. This chapter includes a detailed description of the methods used in the study. These include the study's design, sampling and participants, research site, instrumentation, description of the data collection and analysis, and treatment of the data.

Design of Study

A general qualitative approach to methodology was used for this study. Qualitative research provides opportunities to gain rich details and descriptive stories from participants (Njie & Asimiran, 2014). This study sought to understand the experiences of fraternity members as they joined a group and as they brought in new members, which required setting up opportunities for participants to tell their story and received as much detailed information from participants, and this could only be done in a qualitative manner. The research was conducted using semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted via Zoom and on an individual basis between the researcher and the participants.

Participants

Participants of this study were four alumni of historically white fraternities, who are one to four years removed from their undergraduate studies. This provided an opportunity for the participants to be able to reflect on their experiences post involvement removing the fear of getting in trouble for saying something. Additionally, this is taking place in Spring of 2023 where the United States has experienced the COVID-19 pandemic. Getting individuals who

went through the new member process of joining a fraternity before the pandemic was important toward getting a traditional perspective.

The sample size of the study was four alumni from different institutions in the Midwest. The researcher wanted to identify individuals who are a part of different fraternities; in doing so, the researcher hoped to see how groupthink theory is played out in different-minded groups within the new member process across the fraternity community. The researcher contacted other male, Greek-affiliated alumni they are familiar with and asked them to send out an email soliciting volunteer participants (Appendix B) as well as a demographic survey (Appendix C) to gain information about potential participants. Once individuals have declared that they wish to participate, they received an email to schedule their virtual interview. Participants were identified by a number as they submitted their surveys. Later, as transcripts and coding began their numbers were changed to pseudonyms. The participants were given the pseudonyms Bruce, Noah, Lucas, and Howard.

Bruce attended a regional comprehensive, mid-sized, public institution in the Midwest and is a member of Alpha Alpha Alpha fraternity. He went through his new member process in the Fall of 2019 and graduated in 2022. While in the chapter he served as the chapter Recruitment chair and Chapter President.

Noah is a member of Beta Beta Beta fraternity and joined his chapter in the Spring of 2019 after transferring into the university. He attended a regional comprehensive, mid-sized, public institution in the Midwest and graduated in 2022. While in the chapter, he served as the Risk Management Chair.

Lucas attended a regional comprehensive, mid-sized, public institution in the Midwest and is a member of Gamma Gamma Gamma fraternity. He joined his chapter in the Fall of 2018 and graduated in 2021. While in his chapter he served as Treasurer and Standards Chair.

Howard is a member of Chi Chi Chi fraternity, joining his chapter in the Fall of 2017. He attended a private institution in the Midwest and graduated in 2021.

Research Site

The study was conducted via Zoom with individuals who completed their undergraduate studies and are one to four years removed from their graduation. This medium was chosen due to its ability to interact with members from diverse fraternity chapters, rather than just those found on a singular campus, and the different new member processes for each. There are some fraternities that have a new member process lasting 72 hours and there are others that last 8 weeks. This rich diversity helped the researcher better understand if the length of the process is a factor in how groupthink theory plays out in the new member process.

Participants were instructed to schedule their interview at a time that is convenient for them to speak privately and honestly, without interruption. Additionally, the researcher was in a private space.

Instrument

A demographic survey (see Appendix C) and interview protocol (see Appendix D) were developed to help guide the one-on-one interviews. The questions on the demographic survey were intended to help the researcher find participants that match the criteria for participation in the study. The questions on the interview protocol were designed to understand what experiences members had during their own new member process, as well as how the process is seen now, as an alum of the institution. The interview protocol was divided into three sections: the

participants' perceptions and knowledge of their own new member process, what hazing means to them, and why they would participate in activities that they considered to be questionable.

The first part of the interview protocol included open-ended questions pertaining to the participants' experiences and perceptions of their chapter's new member process. Examples of these open-ended questions include: Why did you join your fraternity? What expectations were there of you as you went through your New Member Process? The second section of the interview protocol included open-ended questions pertaining to hazing and what that means to them. Examples of these open-ended questions include: What does hazing mean to you? Knowing what you know about hazing, what would you allow yourself to engage in? The third and final part of the interview protocol included open-ended questions regarding why they felt the need to participate in any activities that they considered to be questionable. Examples of these open-ended questions include: How many times did you question what was being asked of you during your New Member Process? How many times do you and your fellow members question the New Member Process?

Participants were also emailed the informed consent document to review prior to the interview. At the beginning of the interview the document was addressed formally, and the researcher asked the participants to affirm that they understand and agree to participate in the research.

Researcher's Reflexivity

As a member of the fraternity and sorority life community, I have always been fascinated by all that it has to offer. This includes the positives and negatives. However, one thing that has intrigued me the most is the idea of hazing that occurs within the community, particularly regarding fraternities. In February of 2017 there was a hazing death at Penn State that rocked the

community (Deak, 2018). However, it was in the following fall that I joined my own fraternity against the trend. During my new member process, I never experienced any severe forms of hazing, such as binge drinking. The only thing that I went through that is considered hazing, by definition, is that of a scavenger hunt.

While that is the most that I experienced, I have known other members in the community who have experienced those binge drinking games, or physical abuse through hazing. When I heard their stories, I found myself asking why? Why put up with the abuse and punishment to join an organization? This hits at the very heart of my study. I am seeking to understand why people continue to stay loyal to an organization that tears them down at the beginning of the relationship. I know that when I was considering joining a fraternity, I told myself that I would not endure any sort of hazing because that was not what I was looking for.

Since I have not been subjected to severe hazing, it gives me more of a judgmental bias going into the research. At the same time, being a member of the fraternity and sorority life community gives me a different bias as well. That bias is one that will seek to safeguard my participants so as to not hurt the community. However, as a researcher I need to minimize these biases as much as possible. For the judgmental bias, I will focus on seeking to understand, not judge. As a researcher this is what I want to know and judging my participants will not only hurt my credibility as a researcher but will also turn off my participants so much so that they might decide to stop participating. As for the other bias, I will minimize it by remembering that the research that is being conducted is one that will help the community in the long term and that in order for the study to be the most impactful it needs to have those tough-to-swallow experiences to best understand why people choose to stay committed at their lowest.

Data Collection

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews via Zoom during the second half of the fall 2022 semester. The researcher sent out an email to fraternal alumni and from there the snowball technique was used to recruit more participants. The participants were asked to find a quiet, comfortable, and private location in which the interview could be conducted. The participants were also given the informed consent prior to the interview and were made aware of it again at the beginning of the interview. I then asked for the participants' permission to record the interview and remind them that their information will remain confidential throughout the entire process.

As participants completed the demographic survey a number will be assigned to them and all documents with their information will reflect that same number. As a transcript of the interview is developed all identifiable information was changed, this included fraternal group name, undergraduate institution, names of individuals they speak of and so forth. This was done to develop a high level of confidentiality so that participants know that their identity will be protected through this process.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed following the recorded interview sessions and uploaded to a confidential cloud system. Descriptive coding was utilized to analyze the transcripts, while keeping my research questions in mind. This will be done by giving each word or phrase a highlighted section to transcribe it (Saldana, 2013). These words were then used to develop themes related to the research questions and will be developed in the analysis section of this paper.

Treatment of Data

The treatment of the data followed Institution A's IRB protocols. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant's identity and all other identifiable information as well. All data collected was stored on a OneDrive document that is password protected and only accessible to the researcher. Data collected will be stored for three years, per IRB policy, after which time it will be destroyed.

Chapter Summary

A qualitative study was conducted virtually via Zoom to examine fraternity members' perceptions of the new member process and the role of hazing. Virtual interviews were recorded and transcribed according to best practices. During the transcription process, all identifiable information was removed from the data and stored in a separate file that only the researcher had access to. Participants of this study were alumni from various organizations and institutions. The data was coded and categorized to identify themes and patterns between respondents. Chapter Four will provide the findings from the study's participants.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis

This chapter will focus on analyzing the four semi-structured interviews conducted and analyzing the information to better understand alumni of fraternities' perceptions of the new member process, in addition to their definition of hazing and why they willingly choose to participate. The results are presented based on the research questions; 1) How do fraternity members describe the new member process, 2) How do fraternity members define and describe hazing, and 3) Why do they participate in these activities that would otherwise be considered questionable? This chapter presents the themes identified related to each of the research questions.

Alumni Descriptions of the New Member Process

The participants of this study were asked to describe their new member processes, both as they were going through the process and once they became active members in their respective organizations. From this, there were two major themes identified when describing the new member process. The first theme was expectations of the experience and the difference between those as a new member's versus an active member's expectations. The second theme was an emphasis of the transformation that participants underwent through their process.

Expectations of the experience

As the participants shared descriptions of their experience, they talked about how they had expectations related to what they would experience as a new member and that there was a shift as they became part of the group. Their responses were analyzed from the two perspectives. First, what their experience was like as a new member. Second, what their experience was like

initiating/welcoming/orientating other new members. This section provides those two different perspectives.

New Members. Recalling that new member process for these individuals brought back several memories of what they were expecting the experience to be like, as well as what happened. As they spoke there were a couple of different themes they identified. These include education process they went through and the role expectations.

Education. When the participants were asked to describe their new member process in one word, the responses were different, but all the responses were linked to what they experienced as they went through the new member process themselves. Learning about the fraternity was the most talked about theme and how they had to get educated on their new organization. Bruce described his process as "educational;" and went on to say,

> When I walked in, they [the active members] kind of held my hand and guided me to learn the knowledge and I guess the history of [Alpha Alpha Alpha], like the history of who were the founding members, what the positions are in the house.

Noah shared, "It was just kind of learning, like classes, the history of it." Lucas stated, "I had quizzes, I had homework, like it was a class." Howard said, "We had to do quizzes. So, you know, we had to do like names and faces, hometowns, majors, pledge fathers, all that stuff, like the Greek alphabet, Founding Fathers, stuff like that." Lucas talked about the stress that came with the education of the history of his fraternity. "And then I remember us all going back to one of the study rooms of Gamma Hall to just wait together right to wait until our bigs called us and said, we passed, or we didn't pass." Howard also remarked that, "I remember them describing it as like, an extra four-hour class".

Noah also felt that the new member process helps to educate members to the Greek community, "So having that new member process helps you understand like these tools, you have this tool here, for this part, build it together. Now you understand why this works together?" Lucas stated that the purpose for a new member process was to help educate those new members on what being Greek means.

But I think outside of just learning the values, the history of your organization that also should be teaching them the expectations of what being Greek is XYZ, right? Being Greek in this country, because I think that's the part that we're getting away from. So much is we're focusing on the not important stuff instead of the important stuff.

Bruce talked about the learning of items outside of just the history of his chapter. "I mean, you go to college, you get a degree, but you don't go to college to learn leadership roles, values, and those types of things. So that was the main part that was part of like, educational."

Expectations Given. When it came to the new member experience and knowing what to expect participants identified that there were a lot of expectations placed on them, either explained or unspoken. Noah, a transfer student who decided to join a fraternity, shared his experience of being the oldest in his associate member class.

I joined when I was 21. So, I was an older person. But it's something that it's, it was like, I was trying to be mature for my age, while there's freshmen, I'm rushing with the same time. And I felt a lot of times, like, if they messed up, it's my fault. You know, because it's like, "Hey, you're the oldest, you should have more wisdom." And, you know, it's not like I got in trouble or anything, but it's just kind of like each class reflects on, you know, the oldest or, like, who's ever "in charge of it?"

Bruce was given verbal instructions by the active members. "Our expectations were not to do anything that would get the word out. Just not doing something stupid, that put a bad reputation on the fraternity." Howard was verbally instructed by the active members to "wear a pledge shirt and have it be tucked in and you had to wear a pledge pin on your collar." He continued on to say, "If an active caught you without the pledge pin, they could do something." Howard also talked about the need for a project done by his pledge class.

Oh, so for the pledge project, we had to [know] what our goal was, which was to raise money for the fraternity and for our pledge project. Which basically the project is just like a project that we do around the house just to like, make it nicer, keep it up to date. So, in order to do that, you raise money.

Lucas and his fellow new members identified the expectations from the active members when he joined to, "be the best we could." Lucas further elaborated stating, "There were expectations that we held ourselves to a high standard, right, like the minute we became an associate of Gamma Gamma Gamma."

Active Members. When it came time to be an active member, the expectations were now different from those that were given to them as a new member. Participants varied in their roles within their respective organizations, which caused them to play different roles in the new member process. As they spoke there were two major themes that appeared. These were the seriousness of the new member process and the secretive nature of their respective rituals.

Changing Perception of the New Member Process. As the participants spoke about their role in the new member process once they were active members they all identified differences. The seriousness of their chapters new member process once they were active members was a topic of note throughout the interviews. Bruce stated that, "It was stressful. The other side isn't as

fun as being on the new member side. Just because, you have to make sure that they're doing good and you're kind of responsible for them in that way." Noah talked about the need to watch other active members to ensure proper handling of new members was being conducted.

But once you're an active, you know, I kind of you monitor the other member active members, you know, making sure like, you know, they they're not doing you know, I always wanted to make sure that we that they aren't doing something above and beyond they shouldn't be doing.

Lucas spoke about his observations in his chapter when it came to the new member process.

Because, you know, after you've been in the organization for a couple years, you kind of forget some of these things. And, you know, when actives are grading our tests, like they're looking at an answer key, right? They don't remember these things.

Howard talked about the shift in perception he experienced in his chapter upon being conferred with an active member status.

I would say the biggest difference was just how serious it was. Whenever you're a pledge, you think, Oh, this is super serious. Like, if I don't get this done, I'm not gonna get into the fraternity like, I'm gonna get kicked out or something. And then you get to be like, active, and you're just like, I don't really care.

Secretive Nature of Rituals. The secretive nature of fraternities is a subject of importance, and participants in this study identified that there was some confusion for them about what was secretive and what may not be. Lucas remarked,

But I think overall, it was kind of the obviously like, as a new member, you're really like are kind of kept out of the loop. Like you we know the very least, right? Like, we don't know what happens in chapter. We don't know what happens within the chapter.

They spoke about how things change when they are active members going through the process with the new group. Noah talked about how he was more hesitant to answer new member questions once he was an active member; "If they had a question, I would ask someone else, it'd be like, what's open? What's closed? That's always my number one question. Because I didn't want to be the guy who told him this." Noah went on to talk about how the knowledge of why his process was the way it was, helped him to better understand his fraternity.

You know, I felt like getting that knowledge [gained from ritual] really helped me understand that this was designed to be like this on purpose. You know, if we were to tell everything on your first semester, you know, the illusion of the whole process is no fun. It's no good, you know, why would you stay?

It appeared that the confusion they experienced as a new member was not clarified as they became an active member, unless they were directly connected to the process. Each of the participants identified their own confusion about what they understood or lacked knowledge regarding the process.

Alumni Definition and Descriptions of Hazing

The participants of this study were asked to define and describe hazing from what they know, either through personal experience or from other sources. Participants spoke about how their definitions stem from examples seen in news, popular culture, and educational sessions that the participants attended during their time as an undergraduate. They all had a different definition, and these were formed from their experience and how they had been educated with

two major themes emerging. The thought of forcing someone to do something is the first type, or giving them no other say on the matter, and causing discomfort to others, through some action is the second type as described by the participants. However, there was still a disconnect between the recognition of hazing and the interpretation of it being a negative.

Half-way through the interview each participant was shown a list of hazing activities compiled by stophazing.org. The intent of the list was to take note of each participants reaction, both verbal and non-verbal. Each participant's first reaction was to show surprise, whether that be widening their eyes, or by verbally saying, "Oh." After his initial wave of surprise, Bruce immediately started to talk about the vagueness of the activities, saying that there was no clear description of some items. He did say that the items on the far right, or those items that are the most severe such as forced consumption of alcohol, were indeed hazing. However, the items on the left side of the list, or those items that are less likely to be recognized as hazing such as demeaning names, he did not agree with. "I guess the first thing that stands out to me would be in the middle where it says asking new members to wear embarrassing and attire, in my viewpoint, they are asking so that doesn't seem like hazing."

Noah was his fraternity's loss prevention officer, whose role in the chapter is to help make sure that all members and chapter functions were meeting the safety guidelines of the fraternity, campus, and law enforcement agencies in the area. Upon seeing this list, he was initially surprised by the items listed, but once he read through each of them, he recognized the majority of them from his training for his position in the chapter. "For me, you know, it's not surprising what some of these are. You know, for me, I didn't experience 99% of this, you know, it was but this is also what I expected it to be."

Lucas' reaction to the list was the one of least surprise. He is going into the field of higher education, and as a result, has dealt with these instances during his graduate assistantship.

Howard realized that some of the items on the list were things that he went through. "Yeah, I mean, I guess whenever I was thinking of it, I wasn't really thinking, like, there are some things on there that, you know, I went through, but like they didn't fit my definition of hazing."

Force of Actions. Bruce talked about the forcing of another individual in his definition of hazing. "My definition of hazing would be the candidate or new member has no option but to say yes, so they cannot say no." Howard stated, "Hazing would just be like, doing any harm or anything to a pledge or forcing them to do anything that they really don't want to." Lucas provided the definition of, "The unwanted forced behavior of something."

Bruce provided examples of forcing others to drink alcohol or "do some things like forcing them to embarrass themselves."

Discomfort to Others. The second theme was defined as causing discomfort to others. Noah provided his definition of hazing as, "Hazing, in my definition is doing something that can cause discomfort, or a lot of discomfort in trying to prove something to a group or a member." Lucas, who began by talking about the unwanted behavior continued in his definition of hazing saying, "... and the ability to make somebody feel uncomfortable or lose their own value." The participants did not have trouble describing hazing but defining this specifically seemed challenging.

Alumni Participation in Questionable Activities

The participants of this study were asked why they may have engaged in either hazing or questionable activities, as well as how often they questioned what was happening to them, or

happening to others once they became active members. The first major theme that appeared in

the responses was the idea of social norming, through the variables of support and trust, with

active members and their fellow new members. The second major theme that appeared was the

notion of comfortability surrounding their respective definitions of hazing.

Social Norming

Part of joining a fraternity is joining a brotherhood, or a premade support system. These

brotherhoods have their own social norms. As defined by the Stanford Dictionary of Philosophy

(2018), social norming is "the informal rules that govern behavior in groups and societies." The

participants in this study, in talking about their experiences, provided greater insight into this

concept.

Bruce's favorite part of his new member process was, "spending time with the 16 pledge

brothers I had." He would go on to describe the treatment that he received from the active

members.

With open arms. I mean, right away, I had guys that were maybe juniors or sophomores

reaching out asking if I need help with English asking if I needed help with a peer review.

That was probably the best support system you could have is you know, having those

guys be there just in case you know, you're having a hard time adapting to college.

Noah also spoke about the need to adapt to the thinking of the chapter. "As a member, you know,

I understood it as, you know, getting the group, you know, to get in the mindset of everything."

Lucas felt supported by the active members outside of his new member process. "I was running

for the Board [of Trustees] for the first time, they were super supportive, like, the whole time,

you know, they kind of rallied behind me, just as a member." Lucas talked about the immediate

sense of support that he received after receiving his big. "But then it was like, the minute you got that you kind of like then join this family, right? And so, then you had all these supporters." Howard discussed his social scene as he was going through his process. "Because I was enjoying just hanging out with the guys." He continued to say, "I don't remember all the things that sucked as much as I do, like, you know, the good times that I had with my friends." Bruce also spoke about the want to become a full member of the fraternity of the willingness to achieve the rank of active member.

> Honestly, I was just trying to earn my letters. So that was just more motivation to, you know, take those tests get through the process, so I could actually become a member. So if anything, it actually kind of helped my motivation to get through, you know, to become an active member and to become a part of a fraternity, an Alpha Alpha Alpha.

Noah spoke about how he was doing what he needed to do to earn trust within the group. "You know, late at night with the group, I may have felt uncomfortable the first time. I don't know, you know, these are all new people to me, I'm there and I'm trying to get their trust." He continued on regarding the feeling of gaining trust from the fraternity.

> I talked to them, like the people my age that I just met for the first time, like, they're my best friends now. But like, at the time, I was there, kind of like, you're kind of old and I'm like, I don't know, you know, and so it felt like it took a while to, you know, gain their trust and understand it for the first few first months, you know, I'm new, I was a 21 year old guy joining a fraternity, and a I'm new and these guys had been in for two years.

Lucas also spoke about how the chapter had similar thoughts on hazing. "Because I think we all kind of had a very similar mindset of like, what we were like, what we view as being okay."

Howard also discussed the traditions that occurred in his chapter. "But I never really did anything at same time to try and stop it [crab walking in the hallway] because I was just like, oh, this is how it is, you know, this tradition or whatever." He discussed another tradition as well.

We have this thing where like, you take a shot with your pledge father, but there were numerous times whenever people wouldn't drink. Like me; my freshman year I really didn't drink at all... I did end up taking the shot, but not because I was forced to it was more like you know this tradition.

Howard also spoke about how some hazing that he endured that he did not consider to be hazing. "And so basically what they did is say, Oh, you're sleeping in here for the night. And so basically, they just put us in there [a room]." He continued on to say, "But actually, it was it was a lot of fun. I there's some good memories that came out of there." Howard also talked about nicknames among the fraternity.

And then like demeaning names, like people will get called nicknames. But yeah, I feel like that, happens in my friend groups, too. It's not just like, specific to the fraternity. I think that's at least with my friends. That's just how it's always been whenever I've been around a group of guys.

Willingness to Engage within Personal Definition. A common theme that all four participants mentioned at one point, or another, was their comfortability with less severe hazing activities, provided they met their individual definitions. Each participant talked about the different activities they went through and the comfort they felt because no lines were being crossed in the process.

Bruce adamantly stated his willingness to participate in any hazing activities. "I was okay with it morally. If I would have [said] no, then yeah, sure. But I never said no, because there's

not really any of that [hazing] there." He discussed how difficult it is to get a consistent definition of hazing as it brings to mind different things for each person. "The difficult part of putting that process together is getting a definition of hazing. I feel like the definition of hazing is different in many different leaders' minds. For instance, mine is forcing someone to do something that's hazing." He continued on to list those items that he was comfortable with and that are within his definition.

> But you know, if it's something small, like cleaning a house, or I mean, I guess, to some people, I guess taking a test is hazing. So, I guess I was part of that. And I, you know, took the test. So now, just those types of things I'll allow myself to do. I'll drink alcohol, but I won't over consume.

Noah spoke about his comfort levels as he was progressing through his new member process. "It was, you know, it's just kind of like, this is just, you know, at no point did I feel threatened or feel like I had to defend myself." Lucas talked about his experience in regard to his comfortability. "From day one, if at any point, I feel uncomfortable, I feel pressured during my process, I don't feel like I have high enough expectations for the things I'm doing like, I'm not gonna let myself do that." He continued on to say, "And so like, those are things [dressing up each week and being up late] that, like, I recognize now that they crossed the line in some regards, but like, Well, I'm not gonna say crossed a line, because that's my line, right?" Lucas spoke about how he was told upfront if it was physical, so could mentally prepare.

> Like, if we were going to be blindfolded, like we had to consent to it, like if we were going to be kind of blindfolded and brought around the house, like for some ritual, like they told us about it, like, you know, we knew what we are going to do. So it wasn't just like, someone was talking to me then all of a sudden, I had a blindfold on my head, and

then all of a sudden, I was in a car, right? Like all of that was always laid out for us. You

know, they always pre-briefed and debriefed all of those things.

Lucas also touched on the need to continue conducting the activities they did once he was

an active member in his fraternity.

When I was maybe overseeing it in some way, like, or if I was, you know, like, we as an

officer, team, executive counsel, like were, we, you know, very clear on like, where the

line was drawn for us on what we were okay for to happen in our chapter versus not.

Howard spoke about his experience when it came to comfortability during his process.

"According to my definition, though, like there wasn't anything, but like, there were definitely

situations where, like, I wouldn't have chosen to do things." At one point during the interview all

participants were asked to look at a list of hazing activities complied by stophazing.org. Howard

gave his reaction when looking at the list. "Yeah, I mean, I guess whenever I was thinking of it, I

wasn't really thinking, like, there are some things on there that, you know, I went through, but

like they didn't fit my definition of hazing."

CHAPTER V

Discussion

This qualitative research study used semi-structured interviews to examine the role of hazing activities as part of the orientation for new member into their chapter from the perspective of fraternal alumni along with why they themselves chose to participate in those hazing activities. Four alumni of fraternities with varying levels of involvement within the chapter were asked a series of questions (Appendix D) around the following research questions; 1) How do fraternity members describe the new member process, 2) How do fraternity members define and describe hazing, and 3) Why do they participate in these activities that would otherwise be considered questionable. This chapter discusses the findings of the study, implications for fraternity national organizations and chapter members, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

This discussion is broken down by the three research questions that guided this study. Upon completing the analysis, the discussion was developed toward understanding the findings and providing information about what was learned.

Description of New Member Processes

The participants looked back fondly on their respective new member processes. However, they all also talked about the expectations that were placed on them as new members and how those expectations differed from their experience as active members in the fraternity. As new members, they talked about the parts of the process that they identified as being important: the first being learning and retaining of knowledge and then brotherhood.

One part of this experience involved hours of learning that they went through to understand the origins and values of the larger national fraternity. They also learned about the

various roles within the chapter structure and how they could become more involved. As they became active members they realized that no one remembered that information that they so painstakingly learned and felt pressured to recall as they learned as new members that everyone used answer keys to grade those tests. This instills in them that the information is not intended to be lifelong knowledge. These participants identified that it was simply information needed to gain entry to the fraternity.

Most of the participants spoke about new member process revolving around the education process. Once members achieved active member status, there was not a plan in place to keep them a part of the new member onboarding process, unless members took on leadership positions within the chapter which would cause them to attend new member meetings to talk about their positions. Members who do not go on to take on leadership positions are stuck asking the question of "what is my role now?" when it comes to the new member process.

It also appears that once the new member joins the group, they do not necessarily have a specific role in the onboarding of other new members, unless specifically designated. This left some of them feeling confused and uninvolved. They provided examples of not knowing what they could or could not say to new members and being unaware of the expectations of them during this process. Having a lack of direction could make groups vulnerable to inappropriate actions and activities. Providing a specific expectations and involvement could lead to a better process of onboarding that eliminates problems with hazing in the future.

Definition and Description of Hazing

The definition used for this study of hazing comes from Hoover & Pollard (1999) and clearly identifies hazing as "any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a fraternity regardless of a person's willingness to participate. The intent is often to humiliate,

degrade, abuse, or endanger." The participants in this study were first asked about their experiences of joining a fraternity in an effort to determine if there were activities that may be identified as hazing. Then, they were specifically asked to define hazing. They were not able to specifically define it and part of this comes from their own personal experiences. When shown a list of hazing activities provided by StopHazing.org (2020) they had a variety of different responses.

At some point in each of the four interviews, each participant identified how there is a lack of a consistent definition of hazing. Each spoke about the concept of hazing from a personalized definition, and it appears to come from their own perception of what hazing is in their own mind, and from what they have personally experienced. This in turn required the participants to talk about how their definition of hazing differs from a concept that they could not quite pinpoint, perhaps this is because none of them were provided with a specific definition before they joined a fraternity, while they were becoming a new member, or as an active. Thus, leaving this researcher to believe that the participants were speaking of a socialized hazing definition.

This missing element, a clear definition, caused the participants to defend the actions that they participated in and asked others to go through after them. Each of the participants identified that they were provided a training of sorts in preparation for the new member process when joining and as an active member. One example is Bruce, who became President of his fraternity, was adamant that all activities that he went through were not hazing, even when shown that activities like cleaning of chapter spaces are considered hazing. Examples like this shows that even after the trainings that every participant was required to go through at one point or another, knowledge was not retained.

Another key finding is that the alumni were able to identify severe forms of hazing, such as forced alcohol consumption or physical abuse, but were unable to identify less severe forms of hazing, or perhaps they struggle to accept that what they went through or what they did to others could be considered as hazing. These activities included things like deception, social isolation, cleaning, and demeaning names; all of these were passed off as traditions and the way the process happens. Part of this stems from the masculinity that is associated within the fraternal system. This study did not focus on that, thus one cannot make a correlation between the two. The other part is the idea that hazing is individualistic. What is considered hazing to one person, might not be hazing to another, and so on and so forth. The idea that individuals can draw their own line in the sand and say if an activity crosses their comfortability is one that all participants echoed and will be explored in the next research question.

Reason for Participation in Questionable Activities

Understanding why individuals would participate in activities that could be considered as hazing was at the heart of this study. Participants were intentionally led through the interview to gain insight into their new member process, seeking out those opportunities for them to share what might be considered as hazing. Then, they were asked to define hazing which led to asking why they participated. What was discovered was that social norming, being part of a group and how they were all thinking, had a big influence. Likewise, their own socialized definition also played a large role in their decision to participate. These are explored more below.

Social Norming. The instant support system that was waiting for them, combined with the activities that they went through caused each of them to positively reminisce, even when the discussion turned to their participation in hazing. Three different themes appeared when it came

to the social norming that was playing a role in the new member processes: brotherhood, "earning your place," and traditions.

All of the participants talked about the support system that they received immediately upon entering their fraternity with fond memories. These support systems, or brotherhoods, helped them with classes, running for other leadership positions on campus, and them cope with the stress of college. The trust that the participants felt in the individuals helping them was enough for them to feel comfortable doing whatever was asked of them. Which is an indicator that sense of belonging is so important to them in those early days of joining the group. This includes the asking of participation in activities, that others would consider hazing, but due to the trust and connection formed between the active members and the new members, new members were more than willing to participate. This aligns with Kohlberg's (1958) *Stages of Moral Development* as we see the new members in the preconventional stage. They work to be obedient to the active members who are leading them through the process and mentoring, while also working to receive approval from authority.

The majority of the participants talked about how if at any point they were uncomfortable they did not have to continue on with the activity. But, they never said "no" which is a strong indicator of groupthink theory playing a part in the process. If every member agrees to an event and no one, not even the new members, question what value the activity added, then groupthink takes hold within the group.

Another type of social norming that was found in the results, was the concept of "earning your place." One participant talked about how they wanted to "earn their letters." This thought process is one that helped motivate new members, when they felt doubt in the brotherhood that they had bought into. If the brotherhood was not there to help push them along, the idea of being

able to prove to the rest of their Fraternity and Sorority Life community that they were able to

pass all the trials associated with the new member process and showing off a pair of letters

motivated them to finish. It was almost like a badge of honor. This was typically seen in the

latter part of the respective processes, especially around final exams on the fraternities and last

activities before initiation.

Throughout both of the prior social norming perspectives there was an underlying

constant – the traditions of the chapter. It is important to recognize the difference between

traditions and rituals. Rituals and traditions explained during the interview process were ones

that were looked back on with fondness. Between going on cardboard runs for a cardboard maze

to being blindfolded and led through an activity by active members, the activities discussed

varied and they trusted this group and knew they were not alone in the activity. While the

activities that were participated in were questionable, there was no question that the activities

themselves did bring together the chapter. The closeness and bonds that were formed by

participating in these traditions of the chapter did indeed help to draw the brotherhood closer

together. The *Perfect Storm* theory gets at the traditions and rituals that new members are asked

to be a part of during their process. As chapters are working to plan and set up these events, they

have the power to take the organization down a path that can lead to hazing depending on the

timing of the traditions, how the members leading the traditions are feeling that down, and how

willing the other active members are to defy the authority.

Willingness to Engage within Personal Definition. The notion that hazing is an

individualized process is one that appeared throughout the interview process. They all had a

definition and could tell you what really severe hazing looked like, but when they looked over

the list provided they made sound reasons for why their participation in such an activity was not

hazing, as they defined it. All four participants spoke about their comfortability with the hazing activities they engaged in and recognition of how their own definition was not in line with a broader sense of the term.

However, participants were also adamant that as long as they did not consider an activity to be hazing, that their willingness to participate in the activity did not constitute as hazing. Essentially making it clear that they had their own definition of hazing and it did not line up with the standard definition and examples. As a result, the participants' comfortability with whatever questionable activity set before them seemed to grow during their time in the new member process. As bonds and trusts were formed, so did the comfortability of the definition of hazing. *Perfect Storm* can also be seen here. If the idea of hazing is an individualized concept, then the internal processes of each member will be different (Lipkins, n.d.). If those that are leading the activities and have a stronger threshold for hazing than everybody else, then what happens next will cross others personal line, while not crossing the authority figure's.

Implications for Moving Toward and Anti-hazing Fraternal System

In conducting this research it was clear that hazing is still alive and well in the fraternity system, but not necessarily in the ways it used to be practiced. For the most part the participants identified what would be considered low to medium risk activities. However, the disconnect between participating in these activities and considering them to be hazing is one that raises a red flag. This should cause practitioners to work on moving towards an anti-hazing system. The following groups are in positions where they have the most influence in the new member process. Whether that be through the creation of the new member process at a national level, helping to run the process, or helping chapters run the process, each group have a hand in the process.

Implication for (Inter)National Headquarters Professionals

Fraternal headquarters are in place to help maintain the history, tradition, and decorum of these organizations. They are positioned to help continue the legacy of their chapter by helping to bring in new members and maintain relationships with their brotherhood long after the college years. They also play a vital role in the education and monitoring of groups' activities across the country. In this study it was clear that the organizations participants were members of are not clearly defining what hazing is to their membership, nor are they looking at individual groups behaviors to monitor that things are going as they should. One is easier than the other to manage and it needs to become a stronger priority.

Professionals working in fraternal headquarters need to do a better job at creating more intentionality in their fraternity's new member process. Due to the majority of responses being about the education they received when asked about the process, it shows that it is lacking almost entirely. Having positive bonding activities developed for chapters, that maintain tradition and brotherhood are important and will help to alleviate the worry of hazing. Currently, these activities are missing and because of that it creates a space for hazing to develop and occur. The new member process is one that most national headquarters have developed and work with chapters to implement, so the addition of these positive bonding activities should not be an additional hurdle for chapters to conduct; rather these positive bonding activities, should help the new members and active members grow closer to one another, allowing for the brotherhood of the chapter as a whole to grow.

It's also important for headquarter professionals to understand the longevity of the education that new members are required to learn. This study showed the educational portion to be something that borders or directly falls within the category of hazing. Knowing the history of

one's organization is important, but it needs to be intentional, manageable and filled with purpose. Find ways to involve active members so that they too are reflecting on their own history and engaging in the material more than just as they join the group. Help them find ways to connect that are meaningful and retainable. Making it a process they must go through, and one that they could fail at, makes it a box to check rather than a point of pride and something of historical and fraternal membership. This is an opportunity for headquarters to be able to tie more of the everyday items that are asked of chapter members to the education and background of the fraternity. This would allow active members to continue to learn and contribute to the education of the new members.

It was also determined in this study that once they become an active member they are not sure of their role in the new member process unless they are directly involved. This could be a missed opportunity for the organization to engage all members in remembering their history and bonding together. It would also be advantageous for fraternities to also help new members transition in to full membership and understand the expectations placed upon them once the new member process is over so that the transition becomes smooth and they understand what the next stage of their membership will be like.

The idea of a fraternal definition of hazing is one that needs to be constructed on a fraternity to fraternity basis. The reality is that every national fraternity has a definition of hazing; but this definition is one that is not discussed with members more than one time during the process. This causes members to not understand their fraternity's stance on hazing, which leads to hazing within the individual chapters. Having a consistent and well known definition will also help those who serve in alumni advisor roles also continue to support the group during

the new member process. National offices need to work to reeducate members throughout their time in the chapter, which starts in the new member process.

Implications for Chapter Members

Chapter members are the ones who carry out the new member process at the end of the day. They are the ones who make the conscious effort to either follow what is given to them from their headquarters or defy those expectations and make their own new member process. Whichever direction a chapter decides to go, local chapter traditions will insert themselves into the new member process when there is lacking information and direction. Chapter members, whether they are the leaders or just active members, need to ask themselves two important questions: 1) are traditions important to the new member process? 2) Do they add a positive value to the experience? If the answer to either question is no, then the chapter needs to move on from that tradition. Traditions are important and help to remind that chapter of where they come from, but members within the chapter need to ensure that there is a need and value added to the chapter.

The concept of "earning your letters" is not an idea that should drive the new member process. Often times, active members, and alumni, talk about how they had to earn their place among the brotherhood. If chapters are forcing members to show why they should be given a place amongst the chapter by requiring new members to participate in hazing, it only continues the cycle of what was done to one generation, will happen to the next.

Active members in chapters need to recognize the power that they hold over the new members who are going through a new member process. By being a part of an instantaneous support system for those who are working to become initiated into the chapter, it can quickly

create a power dynamic, even if it is a subconscious one. Active members need to recognize that power that they hold, otherwise the opportunity to produce a hazing situation can arise quickly.

Alumni members also play a critical role. Whether they are in advisory roles or just coming back to help with the new member process, they will be respected and listened to by the membership. This is critical because if they engage in positive activities and guide the group toward appropriate traditions and experiences the experience can be that, however; the opposite is also true and many alumni like to come back and drink with the group and this often turns out badly.

Campus Fraternity Directors and Other Professionals

Campus fraternity directors also play a key role in this new member process. They help groups on campus identify eligible new members, coordinate when to do the new member process, and somewhat monitor their activities. Advisors who work with and support national organizations hazing definitions can help educate the fraternity on campus in a coordinated effort to help groups move toward a hazing free process. They are also present through all of the processes happening on campus and can have those important conversations before, during, and after these new member processes.

They also play a vital role in working with the new members before they join. This could happen through educational meetings about joining a fraternity and what to expect. They could make clear what the concepts of hazing, social norming, and group think are and how they influence an individual's desire to belong within the group. This could be followed with ways to approach activities, how to ask questions, and who to turn to when things were not going well. This provides those new members with opportunities to think strategically about their experience.

Fraternity directors can also work with the different fraternities, and sororities as well, on thinking through their new member process and how to avoid making questionable decisions. These directors may be better positioned to have conversations about activities that happen, for example thinking through weather conditions, or access to areas of campus. They are in place to help the organizations be successful on their campus and meeting regularly with the leadership of the group is important, but also taking time to help them reflect on their own anti-hazing efforts is necessary. These directors can play a critical role toward removing hazing from the fraternity world.

This can also be applied to other professionals that work with individual chapters as well, such as faculty and campus advisors, Deans of Students, Vice Presidents of Student Affairs, etc. If these campus based professionals are all able to have the same perception and standpoint on how the new member process should be ran, it can help to create a culture shift for campuses. This will not happen overnight, but through continued conversations between all stakeholders. Part of the conversations should be surrounding the education of the *Perfect Storm* theory for those professionals that do not know it. This theory helps to set a foundation for why hazing continues to appear in the fraternity and sorority community. By engaging in conversation surrounding this theory it will help campus professionals know what to be on the lookout for and what their part in the planning process is.

Future Research

The extent to which hazing in Fraternity and Sorority Life has been studied is extensive; however, no study could fully investigate the hazing experience from all of its many different perspectives, thus it is necessary to continue to think through ways to approach research of this type. More research needs to be done regarding the new members' thoughts on hazing and what

that entails, which is what this study aimed to add to, from a unique perspective, the alumni member.

This study had a small number of participants and should be recreated with a larger pool of participants. This study could be replicated nationally with members of different fraternities across the country. It could be done with just one or two fraternities nationally to see what the consistency looks like from one campus to another and from one region to another. It could also be done with those in fraternities that have large membership and those with very small membership to see what influence that may have. Institutional size often has an impact on the type of hazing that occurs, which would allow for more variety in responses from participants. This study did not look at how masculinity plays a role on the new member process and what impact that has on new members' rationale to being hazed. This could also provide insightful information about the ways in which a group of males may feel more challenged in a group to engage in activities that may not be appropriate. It could also be done from the perspective of those who served in pledge educator roles and how masculinity influenced them. Or, a study that is done simply on how masculinity is looked at from the fraternal experience.

This study should also be duplicated with alumnae of sororities, including the National Panhellenic Conference and the National Pan-Hellenic Council. Most hazing occurs in fraternal organizations and that comes with a lot of assumptions, so conducting a study like this within the sorority culture could provide insightful information. This would allow for a better look at hazing rationales between different councils.

There should also be a look at the retention of members who go through a shortened process. With a shortened process, or lack of a process in general, it can lead to new members being initiated before going through what is essentially a new member process. It would be interesting

to see if the retention in these organizations is higher or lower than the retention rates in organizations with longer processes.

Until hazing is no longer a part of the fraternal experience it needs to be studied. In addition to being studied, it also needs to be provided in education to members of fraternal organizations as well as other students on the college campus. Continuing to further acknowledge that it is not acceptable behavior by any group is necessary to more toward a hazing free world.

Conclusion

The concept of hazing is one that continues to permeate into the Fraternity and Sorority Life community. This permeation is one that is well researched, but not enough is discussed on the new member prospective. This study aimed to address this gap in the literature as alumni reflected on their experiences. This study found that new members want to be accepted by a chapter and will do so by engaging in questionable activities while downplaying the risk that they are put into. The idea of "earning your letters" is one that these alumni believe to be true, especially when trust between the active members and new members is low.

Professionals, both campus and headquarter based, need to work together to find a concrete definition of hazing that the fraternity and sorority life community can get behind when formulating their new member processes. Once these two sides are able to agree on a communal definition, individual chapters can start to execute the processes given to them in a safe and positive manner. Having a common definition and collaborative approach to making it clear what is acceptable and what is not leads to a decrease in hazing related activities.

New members for fraternities are the next generation. The process that they go through in order to be initiated into their fraternity is the only process that they will see, and use, for the

next four years and beyond. Chapters need to recognize that just because something has worked

in the past, does not mean that it will continue to do so. A necessary change needs to occur at the

national level to add depth to a process that is desperately needed.

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Appendix A
List of Hazing Activities
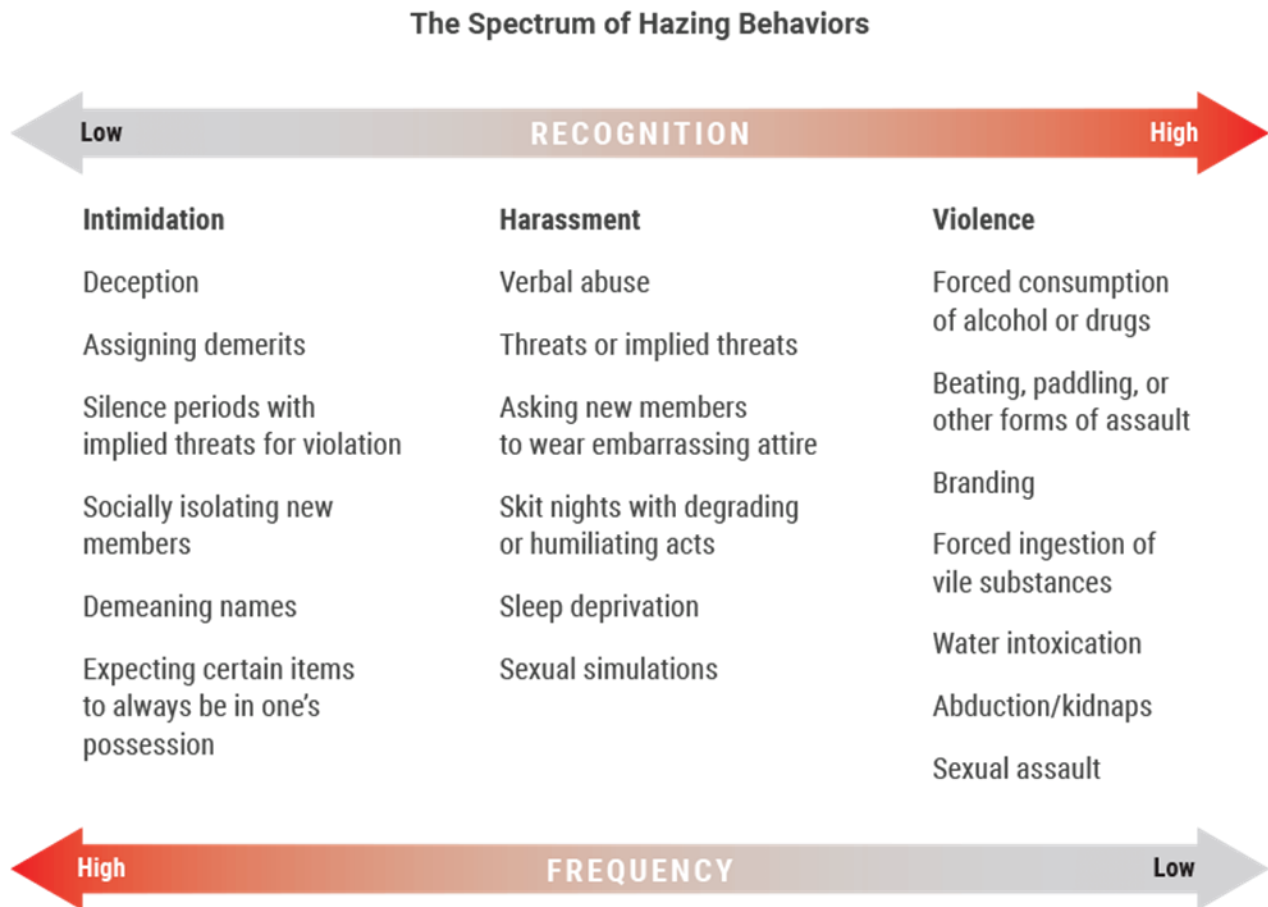
The Spectrum of Hazing Behaviors

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https://www.stophazing.org/issue

Appendix B
Email to Potential Participants

Greetings!

My name is Christopher Gibson and I am a second-year graduate student in the College Student Affairs program at Eastern Illinois University. As a requirement of my program, I am asked to complete a thesis (IRB 22-160) on a topic in higher education that interests me, and I have chosen to conduct research on fraternities' New Member process. If you are receiving this email, it is due to the fact that you are one such alumni. The full requirements to participate in this study are:

1. Be an alumnus of a fraternity.
2. Be 1 - 4 years removed from your undergraduate studies.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete the following demographic questionnaire:

https://qfreeaccountssjc1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3n0mrsDefIcyloy

If you wish to continue in the process, then you will be asked to schedule about an hour for a virtual interview.

Thank you,

Christopher Gibson

College Student Affairs Graduate Student

Appendix C
Demographic Survey

The intent of the survey is to gauge potential participants' contact information, interest in

participating in, and ableness to participate in the study. None of the information gathered will be

shared, rather used to help set up meeting times, if willing.

1. What is your name?

2. Where did you attend for your undergraduate studies?

3. What fraternity are you a member of?

4. When did you join your fraternity? (Semester and Year)

5. When did you graduate from your undergraduate institution?

6. What is the best time to conduct a one hour interview?

Appendix D
Interview Protocol

Welcome the participant to the interview and thank them for their participation. Confirm that

they received the informed consent and answer any questions they might have before we begin.

Ask permission to record the interview.

I: The next set of questions is to better understand the new member process that you went

through.

1. Why did you decide to join your fraternity?

    a. What drew you to joining a fraternity?

    b. What did you know about fraternities before joining? How did you learn that?

    c. Did you have family members who had joined fraternities?

2. What is your current level of involvement with your fraternity today?

3. What is one word that you would use to describe your New Member process? Why?

4. Tell me about your new member process.

    a. Tell me about your favorite moment or moments?

    b. What did you enjoy?

    c. What did you not enjoy? What was challenging about the experience?

    d. How long is your new member process?

    e. How did it feel to go through the new member process?

    f. How often were you required to meet during your new member process?

    g. What expectations were placed on you?

    h. How did this impact your relationship with the other new members?

    i. How did this impact your relationships with the other members?

    j. How were you treated by the older members?

    k.   How were you treated by alumni and advisors of the group?

5.   As a member of the group, as you went to welcome new members to your organization tell me about how that was different from when you went through as a new member.

    a.   What expectations did you have now that you were an active member?

    b.   How did the experience differ from what you went through?

    c.   What did you observe?

    d.   Tell me about your favorite moment or moments?

    e.   What did you enjoy?

    f.   What did you not enjoy?

    g.   How did it feel to be on the other side?

    h.   What expectations were placed on you as an active member?

    i.   How did this impact your relationship with the new members?

    j.   How did this impact your relationships with the other members?

    k.   What did you observe about the influence involvement or role of alumni and advisors?

6.   If there was one thing you could go back and change about your groups new member process what would it be?

7.   What is the purpose of new member orientation in the fraternity system?

The next set of questions are meant to get some clarification about some terms. As you may know hazing is often closely associated with fraternities and sororities. I would like to spend some time gaining insight in to how you approach this topic and what your understanding of this term and those associated with it.

8. What is your definition of the word hazing?

    a. Can you provide examples that you are aware of – they don't have to be specific? (doesn't have to be what you went through)

    b. Where does this knowledge come from?

9. Knowing what you know about hazing, what would you allow yourself to engage in?

10. Earlier I asked about your experience with your new member process, were there any activities that you voluntarily engaged in that you would consider to be hazing or potential hazing activities? Can you explain.

11. What activities (if any) did you feel unsafe/uncomfortable with as you were going through the process?

    a. How about when you were a member planning for the new individuals to join?

        i. What kinds of conversations did you and/or your group engage in around this topic?

    b. Were there differences from year to year as a member?

12. As a member of a fraternity, you may be familiar with the organization StopHazing.org. They do a lot of education around this topic. I would like to show you a list of hazing activities they have developed and are available on their website. *List of hazing activities will be shown (see Appendix A) * Looking at this list, what is your initial reaction?

    a. Did your group engage in any of these activities? Which ones?

        i. What were your feelings as you engaged in them?

        ii. Did you require those after you to go through the same activities? Why or why not?

b. At any point did you and your fellow new members question what was being asked of you? Tell me about those experiences.

c. How many times do you and your fellow members question what is being asked of the new members? Tell me about those experiences.

13. Did you see other groups on your campus engaging in these types of activities?

    i. What sorts of things did you observe?

    ii. What was done at the institution about this, if anything?

14. What role did you see the office of fraternity and sorority programs play in the new member process?

a. How did this impact how groups approached planning?

b. Did they provide any sort of education around Hazing?

15. What is your National fraternity's stance related to hazing and new member orientation?

a. Did they provide any sort of education around Hazing?

16. How has the process changed since you went through it?

a. For your group?

b. For other groups on your campus?

17. What feedback did you receive from stakeholders (brothers, alumni, advisors, campus professionals, headquarters) about the new member process?

18. Having completed this interview, is there anything else you wanted to share with me or any questions you have regarding this research?